

# critical digest

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## This Week

Maurice Chevalier-Playhouse 9/28... A View From the Bridge-Coronet 9/29... The Young and the Beautiful-Longacre-10/1... Island of Goats-Fulton 10/3... Tiger at Gates-Plymouth 10/4... Anne Frank-Cort-10/5.

## Future Dates

Wooden Dish-Booth 10/6... Macbeth-Rooftop-10/7... Hour Glass-Bway Cong. 10/9... Spring Awakening-Provincetown 10/9... Joyce Grenfel-Bijou 10/10... Carefree Tree-Phoenix 10/11... Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter-Belasco 10/12... Shepard's King-Down-town National 10/12... Desk Set-Broadhurst 10/13... Roomful of Roses-Playhouse 10/17

Heavenly Twins-Golden-10/19... Cherry Orchard-4th St-10/18... Macbeth-Jan Hus 10/18... No Time For Sergeants-Alvin 10/20... Song of Sorrow-Black-frairs-10/24... Comedia Francaise-Broadway 10/25... Chalk Garden-Barrymore 10/26... Deadfall-Holiday 10/27.

## November

Reuben, Reuben-ANTA 11/8... Hatful of Rain-Lyceum 11/9... Delilah-Winter Garden 11/10.

## Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

Inherit the Wind-National 9/17. Melvyn Douglas portrayal in Lawrence-Lee script, replacing Paul Muni, was approved by all NY daily critics. Not a carbon copy of Muni, but his own effective characterization, they agreed. Star took on stature in role, headed Atkinson, Times, who still thought script lacked literary distinction. Kerr, Herald Tribune, noted book had been aided by fine jobs of acting by minor characters, some of whose roles were enlarged. Still electrifying theatre, adds Coleman, Mirror. Douglas' performance is more outward than Muni's, notes Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun.

Marcel Marceau-Phoenix 9/20. Unanimous raves for one man show of French mime filed by NY aisle-sitters. Genius was most often used word. A more conscious pantomime artist than Chaplin, cheers Atkinson, Times. Superb perfection, the sort of theatrical gift that no one really deserves, applauds Kerr, Herald Tribune, who suggests M. Marcel run in NY forever. Though McHarry, News, thought the appeal limited to would-be comedians, he did enjoy it. First nighters were positively ecstatic, reports Coleman, Mirror. A stimulating and entirely different evening of theatre, joined McClain, Journal American. Genius on display, sums up Hawkins, WT&S. Mime is presented for 2 weeks as special attraction of Phoenix program.

Henry IV-Part I-City Center 9/21 Brattle Players revival drew split views. Mirror, Post, Journal American, and World Telegram & Sun drama men enjoyed it, while others thought version on dull side. Group presents play with momentum, and effectiveness, okayed Coleman, Mirror. Not as good as Old Vic, but still fresh, interesting, adds Watts, Post. Jerome Kilty, as Falstaff, was approved highly by McClain, Journal American. Con views headed by Atkinson, Times, who put most of blame on Kilty as director. Scenes he is not in were good, others were not. Show is interesting in spurts only, fears Kerr, Herald Tribune. Not very good or very funny, panned Chapman, News.



## OFF BROADWAY

Members of Group 20 Players and the Antioch Shakespeare Festival formed the Rooftop Theater Company and will present 3 plays this season at Rooftop Theatre, 111 East Houston St. Macbeth opens season Oct 7. Group is headed by Ray Boyle and Yolande Betheze. Group will present Saint Joan with Nancy Wickwire as second production.

The Trial closes Oct 8, Theatre 12 next presents Spring's Awakening starting Oct 9 ... Robinson Stone and Bill Penn have joined cast of Broadway Chapel Players' The Hour Glass to be presented for ten Sundays starting Oct 9 at Broadway Congregational Church. ... Oct 18 is new opening date of Fourth St. Theatre The Cherry Orchard. ... Annie's Son opens at Royal, 61 E 4 Oct 12. ... Oedipus at Colonus opens Oct 17 at John Hall Theatre, 342 E 63. ... Originals Only adding 5 pm Sunday performances of Dakota. ... Marcel Marceau may extend engagement and move to Alvin. ... Max Eisen has appealed Theatre de Lys case in Appellate Division of NY Supreme Court.

The Three Penny Opera-De Lys-9/20 -won approval of the three drama critics who covered the opening-Funke, Times, Kerr, Herald Tribune, and Watts, Post. Revived by Capalbo-Chase-Lortel, after many years of in print urging by Atkinson, Times, the current production was listed as having even greater cohesion and edge than the first. One of the modern gems in the musical theatre, summed up Funke, Times. Remains a fascinating musical experiment, added Kerr, Herald Tribune. Watts, Post, joined critical bandwagon, but did note that book was a bit weaker than score. Entire cast was praised by all. Several papers sent music critics to cover show.



## THEATRE Book Comments

"Me and Kit" by Guthrie McClintic was rated by Coleman, Mirror, as a wise, witty, engagingly human saga of show business and a couple of wonderful people.

"On a Shoestring" by Will Morrissey was okayed as an amiable autobiography of the famed Shoestring producer by Down, Variety.

"The Art of the Play" by Alan Downer, an anthology, was recommended by Variety mugg as interesting to stage pros as well as to students. ... "The Living Stage, a History of the World Theatre" by Kenneth Macgowan and William Melnitz" was panned by Variety book reviewer for many omissions and errors and not worth the \$8 tab.



## THEATRE TV Comments

Thornton Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth and Our Town (in a musical version) were presented on TV. ANTA production of Skin was lauded by most of TV critics as fine theatre, though many predicted show was too high-brow for TV audiences. Tuck, Post, thought actors screamed too much. Crosby, Herald Tribune, and Gould, Times, both praised NBC for presenting it. Our Town with Frank Sinatra and Eva Marie Saint was okayed by Times, Post and Variety TV as a fine job.

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GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT

**REVIEWERS PROBLEMS...** Critics are wise to discount the laughter of certain first nighters who know cast members and/or pre-production problems, suggests McClain, *Journal American*. . . Hints for items for producers to skip in attempts to get good notices listed by Nathan, *Journal American*, include: -lack of any bare-chested heroes, lack of a red "Oklahoma" type barn on set, and lack of successful romantic bachelors.

**COLUMN TIPS...** Juveniles have turned down lead of *Pipe Dream* because Rodgers and Hammerstein will only pay Equity minimum, hears Winchell. . . A respected Broadway producer-director carries 2 flasks at all times, whispers Kilgallen.

**LEGIT CLOTHES...** ANTA and a Dress Suit trade group's urging to wear dress suits to theatre, especially on opening nights, was okayed by McHarry, *News*, who will gladly wear the desired tux if they give him a "Press" outfit. . . *Times* reader from Ohio who panned attire of NY audiences got quick answers from 4 NY readers. One feared demands for formal dress at theatre would kill it off completely, another blamed hot summer and LIRR for state of August clothing, while another thought if theatre provided richly rewarding experiences, audiences would dress accordingly.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...** Whatever became of Billy Rose's eloquently proclaimed love for legit, asks Watts, *Post*, on hearing of Rose's 7 year lease of his Ziegfeld to NBC. . . First nighters, faced with a 4 and 5 opening per week schedule, may well tire by Christmas, notes Hawkins, *World Telegram & Sun*. . . A NY festival of theatre classics was suggested by Coleman, *Mirror*.

**INTERVIEW HI-LITES...** Ticket sellers serve a 3 year apprenticeship, usually at race tracks, baseball fields, or Madison Square Garden, Schumacher, *Times*, learned from Pearl Kyser, of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* box-office. From 4 to 8 tickets are allotted each broker for each current show.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

Marcel Marceau evening of Pantomime provides a thrilling experience. Grace, humor, humanity of the French mime is unequalled. The genius of the man is to get almost every member of the audience actively involved in the silent proceedings onstage.

Henry Iv-Part I presented by Brattle Players is at best uneven, at worst-high schoolish. Part of the blame can be put on miscasting. When historical play comes to life it is exciting. But dull spots outweigh the lively.

A central ticket office to provide information and eventually tickets at cost is being planned by Roger Stevens. Telephone reservations via charge accounts are also being considered. Midtown office would provide visitors with latest data on tickets available for the evening.

### PLAYS

Anastasia, Anniversary Waltz, Bad Seed, and Catch a Star closed. . . Lunatics and Lovers moved closing date to Oct 1. . . Plain and Fancy to move to Hellinger Nov 7. . . A Roomful of Roses booked Playhouse for Oct 17. . . Maxwell Anderson finishing his 33rd play Richard and Anne. . . A View From the Bridge was cut to please Boston censor. . . Long distance booking prize goes to musical version of Pygmalion which has signed for a March 15 opening at Hellinger. . . Sidney Kingsley trying to raise funds to save 48th St Theatre. . . Globe Theatre, Broadway and 46th St, may be sold by Brandts to Stevens-Dowling.

### PLAYERS

Bill Tabbert left Fanny and is replaced by Jack Washburn. . . Edna Best is directing Fallen Angels revival which will star Nancy Walker. . . Dorothy Blackburn replaced Glenda Farrell in Desk Set. . . Elsa Raven is new head of New Dramatists Workshop / . . . Leonard Hoffman named NY drama critic of Hollywood Reporter.

### VAUDEVILLE

Palace show headed by Niles & Nadyne and Artie Dann. Also Ruth & Carl Carleson, George Kirby, Senor Cortez, Three Wiles, and Capt. Shaw & Bobby.

### AWARD DEPT.

Josh Logan won Shubert Foundation Gold Medal for second year in row. This year for work on Fanny.

### THEATRE AD NOTES

First anniversary ads for Fanny featured photo of backside of infant.

### THEATRE BOOK NOTES

"Three Plays by Strindberg" published by Univ. of Washington Press include Queen Christina, Charles XII and Gustav III. . . "Talking of Shakespeare", a collection of lectures given at England's Shakespeare Festivals published by Theatre Arts books. . . "The Bishop's Bonfire" by Sean O'Casey published by Macmillan.

### THEATRE RECORD NOTES

Pipe Dream and Delilah original cast album to be cut by RCA Victor . . . Decca to issue Fred Waring album Hear, Hear. . . Columbia to cut original cast album of Pygmalion.

### THEATRE TV NOTES

Musical version of Time Out For Ginger due on CBS TV Oct 6 starring Jack Benny. . . CBS TV Omnibus to devote 90 minute show this season to life of Shakespeare. . . Our Town will be base of new weekly half hour TV series on NBC TV. . . Caine Mutiny Court Martial on CBS TV Nov 10 . . . Brattle Players to present Othello on WABD Oct 12. . . Cyrano De Bergerac with Jose Ferrer on NBC TV Oct 17. . . Don Ameche has signed for a series of one hour radio adaptations of Broadway musicals on Mutual.



